FOURTEEN.*

LIKE many others in the world, there was a mother and her son. The lad was as strong as fourteen men together, but he was also obliged to eat as much as fourteen men. They were poor, and on that account he often suffered from hunger. He said one day to his mother, that it would be better for him to try and go somewhere else to see if he could be any better off; that he could not bear it any longer like this; that he was pained to see how much it cost her to feed him.

The mother with regret allows him to depart. He goes off then far, far, far away, and comes to a large house. He asks if they want a servant there, and they answer that they will speak to the master. The master himself comes and says to him, "I employ experienced labourers generally, but I will take you nevertheless."

The lad answers, "I must forewarn you, that I eat as much as fourteen men, but I do work in proportion."

He asks him, "What do you know how to do?"

He says to him, "I know a little of everything."

The next day the master takes him into a field, and says to him:

"You must mow all this meadow." He says to him, "Yes."

The master goes away. At eight o'clock the servant comes with the breakfast. She had a basket full of provisions; there were six loaves, half a ham, and six bottles of wine. Our lad was delighted. The servant was

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* The first portion of this tale is told of the Tartaro as "Twenty-Four." We suspect that it is an old Tartaro tale joined on to a Christopheros legend, unless indeed this be the very peculiarity and meaning of the Christopheros legend—the enlisting of the old gods into the service of Christ, and including the most human of them in His salvation. The last part of the tale is very widely spread. It is given by F. Caballero in the Spanish, and by Cenac-Moncaut, "Le Sac de la Ramée," p. 57—"Littérature Populaire de la Gascogne." There is something like it in Campbell's "Tale of the Soldier," Vol. II., p. 276.

astonished to see that all the meadow was mown, and she goes and tells it to the master. He too was pleased to see that he had such a valuable servant. He tells him to go and cut another meadow. Before mid-day he had it all down. The servant comes with the dinner, and was astonished to see how much work he had done. She brought him seven loaves, seven bottles of wine, and ever so much ham, but he cleared it all off. The master gives him again another field of grass to cut. Before night he had done it easily. Our master was delighted at it, and gave him plenty to eat. The servant too was highly pleased.

As long as he had work the master said nothing, but afterwards, when he saw that all the harvest served only for the servant to eat, he did not know how to get rid of him. He sends him to a forest in which he knew that there were terrible beasts, and told him to bring wood from there. As soon as he has arrived a bear attacks him. He takes him by the nostrils and throws him on the ground, and twists his neck. He keeps pulling up all the young trees, and again a wolf attacks him; he takes him like the bear by the nostrils, throws him down, and twists his neck.

In the evening he arrives at the house, and the master is astonished to see him return. He gave him a good supper; but he was not pleased, because he had torn up all the young trees. At night the master turns over in his head what he could do with his servant, and he determines to send him into a still more terrible forest, in the hope that some animal will devour him. Our lad goes off again. He tears up many large trees, when a lion attacks him. He kills him in a moment. There comes against him another terrible animal, and he finishes him off too. In the evening, when he comes home, he said to himself:

"Why does my master send me into the forest? Perhaps he is tired of me."

And he resolves to tell him that he will leave the house. When he arrives his master receives him well, but cannot

understand how it is that he comes back. He gives him a good supper, and our lad says to him :

" It is better for me to go off somewhere. There is no more work for me here."

You may reckon how pleased the master was. He gives him his wages at once, and he goes away. He goes off, far, far, far away ; but soon his money is exhausted, and he does not know what is to become of him.

He sees two men standing on the bank of a river. He went up to them, and the men ask him if he will cross them over to the other side of the water. He answers, " Yes," and takes them both at once on his back ; and these men were our Lord and St. Peter. Our Lord says to him in the middle of the stream :

" I am heavy."

" I will throw you into the water if you do not keep quiet, for I have quite enough to do."

When they had come to the other side, the Lord said to him,

" What must I give you as a reward ? "

" Whatever you like ; only give it quickly, for I am very hungry."

He gives him a sack, and says to him, " Whatever you wish for will come into this sack."

And he goes off, far away. He comes to a town, and passing before a baker's shop he smells an odour of very good hot loaves, and he says to them, " Get into my sack," and his sack is quite full of them. He goes off to a corner of a forest, and there he lives by his sack. He returns again into the town, and passes before a pork-butcher's. There were there black puddings, sausages, hams, and plenty of good things. He says, " Come into my sack," and as soon as he has said it the sack is full. He goes again to empty it as he had done with the loaves, and he returns into the town. In front of an inn he says, " Come into my sack." There were there bottles of good wine and of liqueurs, and to all these good things he says, " Come into my sack," and his sack was filled.

He goes off to his corner of the forest, and there he had provision for some days ; and, when he had well stuffed himself, he went out for a walk. One day he saw some young girls weeping, and he asks them, "What is the matter with you?" They answer that their father is very ill. He asks if he can see him. They tell him, "Yes."

He goes there then, and the poor man tells him how he has given his soul to the devil, and that he was expecting him that very day, and he was trembling even then. Our Fourteen asks if he will let him be on a corner of the bed, that he might see the devil. He tells him, "Yes." He then hides himself with his sack. A moment after the devil arrives, and our lad says to him :

"Come into my sack."

And as soon as he had said it, in goes the devil. Judge of the joy of our man ! Our lad goes off to some stone-breakers, and says to them :

"Hit hard ! the devil is in this sack."

They went at it, blow upon blow, stroke upon stroke, and the devil went :

"Ay ! ay ! ay ! let me out ! let me go ! ay ! ay ! ay !"

The lad said, "You shall bring me, then, a paper, signed by all the devils of hell, that you have no rights over this man." The devil agrees, and he lets him go. In a moment he comes back with the paper, and the lad makes him go into the sack again, and has him beaten by the stone-breakers, while he carries the precious paper to the former man ; and think how happy they were in that house !

Our man goes off, walking, walking, on, and on, and always on, and he grew tired of this world. He said to himself, "I should like to go to Heaven." He goes on, and on, and on, but he comes to hell ; but as soon as ever the devils saw that it was Fourteen they shut all the gates. He goes off again, far, far, very far, and comes to Heaven. There the gates are shut against him. What does Fourteen do ? He put his sack in through the keyhole, and says to himself :

"Go into the sack."

As soon as he has said it he finds himself inside, and he is there still behind the door; and when you go to Heaven, look about well, and you will see him there.

CATHERINE ELIZONDO.

We add another version of this popular tale, collected by M. Vinson from M. Larralde de Lesaca, of St. Pée-sur-Nivelle:—

JESUS CHRIST AND THE OLD SOLDIER.

ONCE upon a time, when Jesus Christ was going with His disciples to Jerusalem, He met an old man, and asked alms of him. The old man said to Him:

"I am an old soldier, and they sent me away from the army with only two sous, because I was no longer good for anything. I have already given away one sou on the road; I have only one left, and I give that to you."

Then our Lord says to him, "Which would you prefer, a sack of gold or Paradise?"

St. Peter gently nudges the old man in the ribs, "Say Paradise."

"What! Paradise!" says the old soldier. "Afterwards we shall have Paradise as well. I prefer a sack of gold."

And our Lord gives him the sack of gold, and He said as He gave it to him:

"When this sack is empty it will be sufficient to say, '*Artchila murtchila!* go into my sack,' and everything you wish for will go into the sack."

Our man takes the sack and goes on his road. When he had gone a little way he passed before the door of an inn, and sees a fine leg of mutton on the table. He was hungry, and, opening his sack, he said:

"*Artchila murtchila!* fine leg of mutton, come into my